GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
CIVIL AVIATION
LOK SABHA

UNSTARRED QUESTION NO:6141
ANSWERED ON:05.05.2003
SARS AT AIRPORT
DR. KIRIT SOMAIYA

Will the Minister of CIVIL AVIATION be pleased to state:

(a) whether his ministry has taken note of international warning issued by WHO regarding occurrence of Severe AcuteRespiratory Syndrome disease in Asian Countries;

(b) if so, whether air passengers flying from Hong Kong and China through Indian Airports can transfer the virus to other passengers and staff;

(c) the steps taken to monitor such passengers alongwith other precautionary measures;

(d) whether any enquiry has been conducted regarding such incidents at Mumbai Airport; and

(e) if so, the outcome thereof?

Answer

MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF CIVIL AVIATION (SHRI SHRIPAD YESSO NAIK)
(a) :- Yes, Sir.
(b):- Only Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrom (SARS) affected passengers can transfer the virus.
(c):- Suitable instructions have been issued in consultation with Ministry of Health and Ministry of Home Affairs to allairlines to sanitize all aircrafts coming from affected countries. Director General of Health Services (DGHS) haspositioned doctors at Health Counters set up at 12 international and 9 Customs airports in India. Health Formshave been made available to Airlines and in immigration areas of above Airports to be filled in by all persons disembarking in India to screen symptoms of suspected/probable Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome (SARS)cases. Cabin crew of all airlines have been issued instructions to extend cooperation in filling up the Health Forms on board and also keep vigil on the passengers to detect SARSaffected cases. The health care facilities at international airports have been strengthened by deploying additional doctors and evolving a standard operating protocol. As per contingency plan, all the suspected cases are to be isolated to the designated local hospitals for suitable action. Masks have been supplied at international / custom airports for the immigration and other staff performing duty at the Arrival side. Further, World Health Organisation recommended case definition has been adopted for India and circulated to all concerned organisations. National Institute of Communicable Diseases, Delhi and National Institute of Virology, Pune have been identified as the nodal agencies for investigation of any suspected/probable case. Indian Council of Medical Research(ICMR)has obtained the required primers for preparing reagents to diagnose the viruses believed to be causing SARS.Media is being kept informed on the efforts made by the Government to prevent SARS entering the country and to create public awareness.
(d) :- No, Sir. However, screening, supervision and monitoring are being done by the health authorities.
(e) :- Does not arise.